



news release

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CANADA PARTICIPATES IN MULTINATIONAL MARITIME INTERCEPTION FORCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Marcel Masse, today announced that Canada will resume participation in the multinational Maritime Interception Force (MIF) in the Middle East. The MIF is responsible for the enforcement of United Nations sanctions against Iraq following the outcome of the Gulf conflict.

A Canadian Forces destroyer, HMCS *Restigouche*, will join the MIF in the Red Sea region in the Spring for patrol duty. The deployment will be for approximately six months.

"Since the beginning of the Gulf crisis, Canada has placed a great deal of importance on supporting the UN's ability to enforce its resolutions," said Mrs. McDougall. "This is no less important now. Any diminishing of commitment to the UN would send the wrong message to Iraq."

"Today's announcement is the latest example of Canada's on-going commitment to restore peace and security in the Gulf region," said Mr. Masse. "There is no doubt that our navy will undertake this important role with the same professionalism and dedication displayed during the Gulf operations last year."

Canadian participation in the multinational force ended last fall with the return to Canada of HMCS *Huron*. The decision to resume an active role was made in response to a request from the other Gulf coalition partners currently patrolling the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. At present, naval vessels of the U.S., U.K., France and Australia are assisting the UN to enforce sanctions against Iraq.